

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 546

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS MONTREAL 1054

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR, CA

SUBJECT: CANADAIK SHOWS OFF FIRST CHALLENGER JET

1. CANADAIK'S FIRST CHALLENGER EXECUTIVE JET ROLLED OFF
ASSEMBLY LINE YESTERDAY IN CEREMONY AT COMPANY(S ST. LAURENT
PLANT ATTENDED BY OVER 3000 PEOPLE. CHALLENGER IS REPORTED
TO BE ONLY WIDE-BODIED EXECUTIVE JET ON MARKET, AND REPRESENTS
MAJOR BID BY CANADAIK TO SCORE BIG IN BUSINESS JET
MARKET.

2. PROJECT WAS SEEN AS GAMBLE BY CANADAIK, WHICH SIGNED
OPTION IN 1976 TO PRODUCE CHALLENGER, A NEW GENERATION JET
FROM LEAR GROUP. WHILE PLANE HAS YET TO BE TESTED, CANADAIK
HAS ALREADY RECEIVED 127 CHALLENGER ORDERS FOR TOTAL VALUE
OF DOLS 673 MILLION, INCLUDING ORDER FOR 25 FROM FEDERAL EXPRESS,
A US PARCEL DELIVERY COMPANY.

3. CHALLENGER PROGRAM HAS REVIVED CANADAIK, WHICH CANADIAN
GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER FROM GENERAL DYNAMICS IN 1976. FROM EM-
PLOYMENT LEVELS OF 11,000 IN EARLY 1970'S, EMPLOYMENT FELL TO
AROUND 2000 IN 1976. SINCE BEGINNING PRODUCTION OF CHALLENGER,
EMPLOYMENT AT CANADAIK HAS RISEN TO 4700, AND IS EXPECTED TO
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RISE FURTHER. COMPANY FORESEES POSSIBILITY OF PRODUCTION
REACHING 500 CHALLENGERS, AND IS ALREADY AT WORK ON A STRETCH
VERSION.
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Message Attributes

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